



SPRING CLEANING YOUR E-MAIL

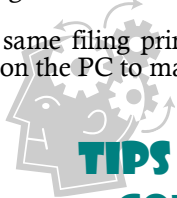
Spring cleaning your PCs once in awhile will clear it of unnecessary files, programs and e-mails, helping people save two hours a day and aid in creating a work-life balance. If you are going to waste five minutes looking for a file or an e-mail those five minutes can lead to hours and that time can be play time. So, how do you spring clean your email?

If you start filing the e-mails you get now this is a good beginning to helping keeping your inbox empty. You can file e-mails by person or by organization. As well, another way for you to organize your e-mail is to color code messages so that any message from a particular person will come in with that assigned color. The minute you look in your inbox and see that color, you know it is from [that person]. Color draws your attention so you can either read it or do something with it or file them.

Another way to help spring clean e-mail is to set-up a rule for newsletters that come in so it's filed and not sitting in the inbox tray so it can be read whenever a person wants to and not seem urgent.

Once it's all filed and you have a filing system, then all you do is search by a person's name or by date to find what you are looking for. It takes minutes and saves two hours a day. Filing under name or category will make it easier to find specific e-mail messages instead of scrolling through a 1000 e-mails in your inbox.

The same filing principles for e-mails can be applied to files on the PC to make them more quickly searchable.



TIPS FOR HEALTHY COMPUTER USE

Did you know that one in three workers spends ten hours a day sitting? Recent research has revealed what you have probably suspected for some time: you spend more time sitting than doing any other activity.

Surveys show that 50 percent of office workers don't leave their desk all day, even to take lunch, while over 66 percent sit down as soon as they get home. Experts say this sedentary lifestyle can contribute to lower back pain. Especially when your notebook and desktop PC are indispensable workplace tools, you need to take special care to develop desk habits that are good for your long-term health, and help you optimize your energy levels and productivity.

Follow these tips to improve your office ergonomics and ultimately, your professional performance.

WHY SHOULD THOU NOT STEAL THY NEIGHBORS WI-FI?

TIME Magazine printed this week a piece called, "Confessions of a Wi-Fi Thief," in which author Lev Grossman admits to using his neighbors' open Wi-Fi connections from inside his apartment. Grossman writes that "stealing" Wi-Fi might be illegal (statutes vary according to where you live) but "definitely unethical." He also mentions a recent survey that found a slim majority -- 53 per cent -- have "stolen" Wi-Fi.

I disagree with Grossman. I don't think it's unethical to "steal" Wi-Fi -- or even possible without deliberate hacking. And it shouldn't be illegal to simply use an open, unprotected wireless network.

There are two reasons why "stealing" Wi-Fi isn't -- or, at least, shouldn't be -- considered theft:

1. By using a Wi-Fi network you're asking for, and receiving, permission from the owner.

When you open up your trusty laptop, check for available networks, choose one and click "Connect," you're instructing your computer hardware and software to communicate with the hardware and software that's providing the Wi-Fi network and ask permission to use the network.

When you do this, a router either grants permission, and assigns an IP address for you to use, or denies permission. If the connection simply works, it means by definition that the network is set up to automatically grant you permission to use it, and to actively provide the means for you to do so. That's what "connecting to a Wi-Fi network means." Your computer works on your behalf to ask permission to use the network, and the router works on the behalf of its owner to grant that permission.

The owner of the network can choose -- and most do -- to deny permission to strangers. Hacking, of course, is an entirely different matter. If someone uses password cracking tools, or hacker techniques to get into a system that is not set up to grant permission to that user, well, that's clearly unethical and should be illegal.



So attempting to connect to a Wi-Fi network (without deliberate hacking) is by definition a process of asking permission to use that network. If you get connected -- again, by definition -- then the router has granted that permission to you.

2. Your computer can't be on their Wi-Fi network unless their network is in your computer.

The conventional wisdom is that using an open Wi-Fi network is theft. The argument goes something like this. "It's my network, and my bandwidth, and by using it you're stealing. It's just like breaking into my house and eating my food. What gives you the right to use my property?"

WI-FI.....

But that metaphor doesn't match what really happens when you connect to a Wi-Fi network.

A wireless router isn't passive, or contained within the home or business of the owner. It actively broadcasts a radio signal dozens or hundreds of feet in 360 degrees. If you can see your neighbor's network on your computer, that means he's breaking into YOUR house, not that you're breaking into his. That signal penetrates your walls and your body (the full effect on health has yet to be determined conclusively) and, of course, your computer. He's affecting to a small degree what's going on inside your computer. (What gives him the right to use YOUR property?)

If you connect via the signal of your neighbor's router, you're connecting to something that is inside your home, and has been placed inside your home without your permission. So it's not like breaking into your neighbor's house to eat his food. It's more like your neighbor breaks into your house without your permission and leaves his food in your refrigerator. If you eat it, the legality or ethics of that usage or consumption is different, isn't it?



Of course, the law is the law, and using someone's Wi-Fi network has been prosecuted in the past. I'm not saying you should break the law, and "steal" bandwidth via someone else's Wi-Fi network.

If anyone doesn't want people using their network, all they have to do is configure their router to stop granting permission.

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TIPS.....

Should I sit up straight?

Conventional wisdom has dictated that sitting up straight is better for your back than leaning forward at your desk. But studies by Scottish and Canadian researchers using a new form of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) have revealed that sitting up straight could be as bad as stooping forwards. The new research suggests that reclining back at an angle of between 120 and 135 degrees will reduce the strain on your lower back. Additionally, try to avoid sitting at your PC in a manner that means you must twist your torso or neck to see the screen.

An alternative to sitting all day could be to work at a standing desk. Popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, they are making a comeback as people realize that standing to work is healthier than sitting.

Improved line of sight

To reduce the strain on your eyes, always work in a well-lit environment. Raise your monitor to eye level, either on a platform, or with a pile of books. This will make looking at your screen easier and will reduce the amount you need to tilt your neck. Alternatively, adjust the height of your chair, your desk or your table. Large monitors offering better visibility (or dual monitor setups) will also help you handle heavy workloads, speed up your ability to read information, and let you keep working longer when you really need to.



Don't break your back, take a break

One of the easiest ways to improve your working day is to take short breaks from your daily work routine. Consider installing work-break reminder software on your computer to prompt you to take frequent refresher pauses.

To rest your eyes, look away from the screen and focus on something in the distance. National Optometric organizations recommend resting your eyes for 15 minutes after two hours at your PC. Use this time to get yourself a drink; the walk will stretch your legs and give your back a break from the sitting position.

In particular, remember to adjust your position in the afternoon, when you are likely to have been sitting for a long time and your body is beginning to tire.

Stretch your productivity

Try and start your day with a brief stretching routine or an activity like yoga. Maybe you could walk or cycle to work. Activities like these give your body the exercise it requires, boost your fitness level, and improve your ability to perform during a busy schedule.